

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS**

21. (currently amended) A communications apparatus comprising:
  - a communication network configured to handle packet-based traffic;
  - a voice processor coupled to the communication network;
  - a control processor configured to assign a queue priority to a communication signal, the communication signal in transit between the communication network and the voice processor, wherein the queue priority determined at least in part according to whether the communication signal is one of a standard call mode or and a bypass call mode, wherein the standard call mode comprises communication signals that are either decoded or encoded by a transcoder and the bypass call mode comprises communication signals that are neither encoded nor decoded by the transcoder.
22. (Previously presented) The communication apparatus according to claim 21, wherein each of the one or more voice processors is configured to insert a control flag into a signal delivered to the control processor, where the control processor utilizes the control flag to determine whether the call is one of a standard call mode and a bypass call mode.
23. (canceled)
24. (currently amended) The communication apparatus according to claim 23 21, wherein the communication signals that are at least one of either decoded or and encoded by the transcoder are one of mobile-to-landline and landline-to-mobile calls and the communication signals that do not require encoding and decoding are mobile-to-mobile calls.
25. (Previously presented) The communication apparatus according to claim 21, wherein the queue priority comprises a modified FIFO queue wherein communication

signals having a control flag indicating a bypass mode call are placed at the bottom of the modified FIFO queue.

26. (currently amended) A method of operating a packet-based network comprising:

determining if a communication signal is one of a bypass call mode or a standard call mode;

assigning a lower queue value to the communication signal when the communication signal is a bypass mode call than when the communication signal is a standard mode call; wherein the bypass mode call is a mobile-to-mobile call and the standard mode call is a mobile-to-landline or a landline-to-mobile; and

transmitting the communication signal in a sequence of communication signals according to its queue value.

27. (canceled)

28. (currently amended) The method of claim 26, further comprising:

utilizing a control flag as a part of the communication signal for indicating whether the communication signal is one of a bypass call mode or standard call mode, the control flag being updated by a transcoder.

29. (Previously presented) The method of claim 26 wherein transmitting the communication signal in the sequence of communication signals according to its queue value further comprises placing a communication signal determined to be a bypass mode call below a communication signal determined to be a standard mode call in a FIFO queue.